EH&S Names New Director

Leah V. Hoy, who has been serving as Interim Director of Environmental Health & Safety since October, assumed the position of Director in May. “I am looking forward to this opportunity to lead a department that will play an integral role in helping UT Arlington achieve Tier One status,” Leah said of her new position. “I anticipate that the months and years ahead will present exciting new challenges and opportunities as the University’s research community continues to grow.”

Leah began her career at UT Arlington in December 1993, after graduating from Texas State Technical College in Waco with an Associate of Applied Science in Radiation Protection and a Certificate in Chemistry. In 1998 she was appointed as the University’s Radiation and Laser Safety Officer, administering the University’s Broad Scope Radioactive Materials License along with the X-ray and Laser Registrations with the Texas Department of State Health Services, Radiation Control Program.

While at UT Arlington she earned her Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Environmental Science and Administration. She became the Assistant Director in 2001 and served as Associate Director beginning in 2002.

During her 16 years at EH&S, Leah has overseen all aspects of the department, including chemical/biological/radiological laboratory safety, hazardous waste management, fire and life safety, occupational safety, environmental reporting, workers’ compensation, budget development and oversight, and has served as representative on several institutional and UT System committees.

“Leah’s commitment and dedication to our university is unmatched,” said John Hall, Vice President for Administration and Campus Operations, in his memo announcing her promotion. “She and I share the same management philosophy of providing exceptional, value added services to our campus community.”

University Promotes “Have An Exit Strategy” Campaign

The Texas State Fire Marshal’s Office (SFMO) has been awarded $566,500 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Assistance to Firefighters, Fire Prevention and Safety Grant. The SFMO will use the award to educate Texas university students about fire safety, escape planning, and life saving, in part, by expanding its existing Have an Exit Strategy program to all public university campuses in the state. Have an Exit Strategy is a concentrated effort to educate Texans and Texas business owners about simple fire safety rules and to ensure that all properties have clearly marked and freely accessible exits.

The impetus for this statewide initiative came after studying the February 20, 2003 fire at The Station Nightclub in West Warwick, Rhode Island, where 100 patrons lost their lives, and the SFMO’s 2004 random inspection of bars, nightclubs, lounges and dancehalls in eight Texas counties. Of the 189 establishments inspected, 182 had means of exit violations.

The “Have an Exit Strategy Where You Live, Work, and Play” initiative urges Texans to learn two ways out of any room they’re in, whether that room happens to be their own kitchen, a board room at work, a movie theater, or any other locale.

Make your safety and that of your friends, family and colleagues your highest priority. Whenever you enter a public place, learn where the exits are located. If you see an exit that is blocked, padlocked, or not clearly marked, tell the manager and report the problem to your local fire department.

(continued on page 4)
Chemical Safety Specialist Joins EH&S Team

EH&S has a new chemical safety specialist, Leeni Vilpas (pronounced like Lenny) from Helsinki, Finland. Leeni earned a Bachelor and Master of Science in Geology and Mineralogy from the University of Helsinki. She is a licensed geoscientist with over ten years of environmental consulting, exploration and research experience, including environmental site assessments, waste management and regulatory compliance.

Before joining EH&S Leeni’s experience included working as a staff geologist with TGE Resources, Inc., a Houston-based environmental consulting company. Prior to immigrating to the USA, Leeni worked for the Geological Survey of Finland and the National Museum of Finland. While at the Geological Survey she wrote a manuscript for a guidebook which was published in 1996 and also published a series of geological articles in European trade journals. She speaks fluent English, Finnish and Swedish, and intermediate German and Spanish. Leeni’s hobbies and interests include sculling, weight lifting, fossil hunting, target shooting, opera, cooking and music. She has also volunteered at UT Arlington’s Archosaur excavating site as a field assistant, and at UT Arlington’s Scotese Museum of Paleontology as a fossil preparator.

As chemical safety specialist, Leeni will be responsible for lab safety and inspections and hazardous waste disposal.

Workers Compensation Basics

All UT Arlington employees, including student employees, are covered by Workers’ Compensation Insurance from their first day of employment. Visitors, volunteers, and students who are not employees are not covered. Employees who are working out of state or out of the country are also covered by Workers’ Compensation Insurance when they are injured during the course and scope of their job assignments.

It is important that injured employees follow all the rules delineated by the Workers’ Compensation System. Otherwise, employees may be held responsible for payment of their medical bills.

Employees are required to report all work-related injuries or illnesses to their supervisor within twenty-four (24) hours after they occur. Employees must inform their supervisors about the circumstances surrounding all work-related injuries or illnesses, even when medical attention is not needed.

Employees are required to complete and sign an Employee’s Report of a Work-Related Injury or Occupational Disease form to document the details regarding when, where and how the injury occurred. Supervisors should review and sign this form, and are also required to complete a Supervisor’s Report of Employee Work-Related Injury or Occupational Disease form after an employee has reported an injury.

Please fax both of the completed forms to 817-272-0273 within 24 hours of notification and then send the originals to the EH&S office in campus mail to Box 19257.

Employees have the right under current state law to choose any medical provider to treat their work-related injury or illness providing the physician accepts WC insurance. A partial list of local treatment facilities is available on the EH&S website.

Please be aware that UT Arlington Health Services does not treat work-related injuries. If immediate emergency medical attention is needed, call the UT Arlington police dispatch at 2-3003 to request an ambulance. For minor injuries, employees should drive themselves to the medical provider.

If an employee does seek medical attention, they should provide the medical provider with a completed and signed Notification of a Work-Related Injury or Occupational Disease form, which can be obtained from their supervisor. This form lets the medical provider know that the work-related injury or illness was reported and it gives the WC insurance information needed to process the medical bills for payment consideration.

After reporting a work-related injury or illness, employees will receive a MyMatrixx Pharmacy Card form from their supervisor. Injured employees should present this form to the pharmacy if their medical provider prescribes medication for their injury or illness. This card will expire 24 hours after it is first used. A personalized pharmacy card will be mailed to employees for any future prescription needs related to the work-related injury or illness.

For questions or additional information, please contact the UT Arlington Workers’ Compensation office at 817-272-5563 or send email to workerscompensation@uta.edu.
Building BIOSecurity & BIOSafety

UT Arlington has biological laboratories within which microorganisms, their components and/or their derivatives or other biologically active agents are collected, handled and/or stored. Some of these laboratories are classified as biosafety level 2 (BSL-2) laboratories since work in them involves agents (biohazardous materials) that could pose moderate hazards to personnel and environment. This requires that control measures be set in place that are proportionate to the risks faced, in line with pathogenicity and potential routes of transmission.

Biosafety is the responsibility of all UT Arlington employees and students involved with BSL-2 biological infectious agents. Principal investigators, laboratory managers, and laboratory workers need to be highly engaged on matters of safety and be creative in developing solutions that are at the same time safe and accommodative to research protocols. One of the most important aspects of biorisk management is the strict adherence to standard microbiological practices and techniques. People working with infectious agents need to be experienced, able to demonstrate competence, and have appropriate general and site-specific training to be knowledgeable about how to handle the hazards that they may encounter in their work. Special attention should be given to general safety principles, good occupational hygiene, and methods to reduce the risk from aerosols and sharp objects.

The general public expects laboratory personnel to act responsibly and not to expose the community to biorisks, to follow safe working practices (biosafety) associated with practices that will help keep their work and materials safe and secure (biosecurity), and to follow an ethical code of conduct (bioethics). Often suspicious of work taking place in laboratories, the uninformed public may even feel threatened by the presence of a biological laboratory in their neighborhood. It is the technical and moral duty of laboratory managers and laboratory workers, with the support of national authorities, to reassure the general public that the activities being conducted are beneficial and necessary, and to prove that the biorisks inherent to laboratory work are controlled with appropriate safeguards.

Components of a laboratory biosecurity program should include:
- Physical security
- Personnel security
- Material control & accountability
- Transport security
- Information security
- Program management

It is important to secure biological infectious agents used in research. Successful biosecurity programs should have full support from all levels of management, be site-specific, and be based on an understanding of facility assets and needs. Identifying which agents and infrastructure need to be protected is department management’s decision (biorisk assessment). Biosecurity programs should apply corresponding security measures by using a graded approach to reduce risk to an acceptable level (biorisk management). The management of biorisk places responsibility on the facility and its manager to demonstrate that appropriate and valid biorisk reduction (minimization) procedures have been established and are implemented. Biorisk management needs to include a comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date infectious agents inventory, which is an invaluable tool for an effective and efficient biosecurity program. This not only applies to materials held on site, but the permissions that may be required before samples or culture are either sent from, or arrive at, the university.

As the research community continues to grow, establishing biorisk assessment and management at BSL-2 laboratories will help to clear obstacles if or when the University needs to get clearance to become a higher containment BSL-3 facility. BSL-3 laboratories house and study agents that may cause serious or potentially lethal disease. Achieving BSL-3 laboratory certification would demonstrate adherence to safe, reliable, and secure practices, and provide UT Arlington an opportunity to motivate all its employees and students to enhance their commitment towards biosafety and biosecurity.
Chemical Inventory Update

As published in our Spring 2010 newsletter, the Chemical Environmental Management System (CEMS) http://cems.uta.edu is being implemented on campus at full speed. The initial chemical inventory has been completed in the Departments of Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Psychology, Geology, Civil Engineering, Bioengineering, Electrical Engineering, Material Science, Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, ARRI, and Office of Research Administration. More than 38,550 containers with chemicals have been bar-coded and entered into the system. A total of 460 users have received access to CEMS and are able to view, search, and update their lists of chemicals.

It is very important to continually maintain CEMS, so it will become our everyday tool for research and safety. Please update it every time a container (or compressed gas cylinder) is emptied or moved to another location. Contact Elisabeth Rowlett at rowlett@uta.edu when you receive new chemicals, if you would like to become a CEMS user, or if you have any other questions.

Fire Exit Strategy (continued from page 1)

When a fire breaks out in a crowded place, people almost always head for the front door. It’s the one exit they know. It’s also the exit that everyone knows. That’s why, when you enter a public place or building you’re not familiar with, you should give yourself multiple exit options. Take a moment to look around and see where other exits are located, so you’ll know where best to go in case a fire breaks out. Remember, the best way out may not be the way you entered.

Please see www.haveanexitstrategy.com, or for more information contact: ehsafety@uta.edu

EH&S Training Courses

Please register for the first two courses through Human Resources: https://policy.uta.edu/HRWeb

Heartsaver AED/CPR: EH&S Training Room, 9:00 a.m to 12:00 p.m.
August 18 (Wed)  Sept. 15 (Wed)  Oct. 13 (Wed)

Fire Extinguisher Training will be held at 9:30 a.m. at the EH&S office, 500 Summit Ave. on
August 19 (Thurs.)  Sept. 16 (Thurs.)  Oct. 21 (Thurs.)

The following training courses are available online through the Research Profiles system at
www.uta.edu/ra/real/loginscreen:

Defensive Driving Course (DDC) This course must be completed every 3 years to remain an authorized driver of UTA vehicles. DPS driving record checks must be renewed annually.

15-Passenger Van Training: Take the online course first. A hands-on driving test is also required and will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on the dates below. Meet at the EH&S office, 500 Summit Ave. Drivers must have already taken the Defensive Driving Course and have a current driving record check to attend.
August 10 (Tues.)  Sept. 14 (Tues.)  Oct. 14 (Thurs.)

Hazard Communication Training
Bloodborne Pathogens Training
Radiation Awareness Training
Laser Safety Training

Call us at 2-2185 if you need other required training which is available in our office on CD, such as Lift Truck, Lockout/Tagout, Respirator, Shipping Infectious Materials, and Hot Work Safety.